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The impact of authentic leadership on employees' organizational citizenship behavior in Ethiopia public service

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ABSTRACT

There has been an increased recognition that more attention needs to be paid to authentic leadership as it emphasizes positive psychological behavior. Organizational citizenship behavior is crucial in the public service, and there should be friendly leadership behavior that could enable public employees to engage in helping behavior. Research in this area is of great interest and with a very active research community. The problem has recently attracted more attention due to the increasing mismanagement, scandal, and corruption in various public organizations that have contributed to the demand for authentic leadership. Although public organizations were trying to introduce various leadership styles that can enhance service delivery, what and how leadership behavior contributes to employees' Organizational Citizenship behavior (OCB) in public service is not well elaborated. The respondents were leaders from 10 public service organizations. Empirical evidence revealed that leaders' authentic leadership behavior impacted employees' organizational citizenship behavior through self-awareness, sharing information, ethical practices, good relation with subordinates, mutual understanding, and transparency. The innovative results of the study revealed that political, cultural, and social aspects influence the leadership behavior of leaders in public service. This study concluded that authentic leaders play a great role in creating a positive relationship and promoting employees' citizenship behaviors. The implications and future research of the results were discussed based on the influence of authentic leadership on employees' OCB.

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Introduction

Authentic leadership (AL) is a positive psychological behavior focused on creating more internalized morals, self-awareness, balanced information processing, and transparency between leaders and followers (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). The current corporate scandals, misuse of leaders, and widely observed challenges of public and private institutions have contributed to the need for authentic leadership. Hence, due to these challenges, there are calls for more authentic and ethical leaders to regain confidence and trust in these institutions (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005; Githaiga, Burimaso, Bing, & Ahmed, 2019; Lorenzi, 2004).

Furthermore, organizational citizenship behavior could be defined as the voluntary contribution of individuals and not a formally recognized role but contribute to the accomplishment of an institute (Bolino & Turnley, 2005). Besides, public service employees must engage in organizational citizenship behavior since public service organizations have different purposes and complexities (Taylor, 2018). Prior research shows the importance of organizational citizenship behavior for individuals, groups, and organizations (Bergeron, 2007; Caza, Zhang, Wang, & Bai, 2015; de Geus, Ingrams, Tummers, & Pandey, 2020a; Nielsen, Bachrach, Sundstrom, & Halfhill, 2012; Wright & Grant, 2010).

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Hence, the researchers argue that authentic leaders could create employees who can go the extra mile through their authentic approach and practices in their work through the support of employees and extra commitment. This leadership could play a more crucial role in encouraging employees OCB in public service. Prior studies confirmed that the positive and substantial relationship between AL and OCB (Edú Valsania, Moriano León, Molero Alonso, & Topa Cantisano, 2012; Pastor Álvarez, Molero Alonso, Bardera Mora, & Moriano León, 2019; Shapira-Lishchinsky & Tsemach, 2014). Nevertheless, the psychological mechanisms connecting this relationship lack clarity (Iqbal, Farid, Ma, Khattak, & Nurunnabi, 2018). Moreover, the relationship between AL and OCB required further study in a diverse culture (Olckers, du Plessis, & Casaleggio, 2019), various sectors (Authors, 2015), diverse employees' backgrounds (Emuwa & Fields, 2017). The study of OCB is limited to specific continents and countries, particularly in Asia and the middle east (China, UAE, Pakistan, and Israel), North America (USA), Europe (Spain and England) (de Geus et al., 2020a). On the other hand, OCB studies in Africa and Latin American countries are minimal. So, there is a problem of generalization due to lacking these continents (Rad, Martingano, & Ginges, 2018). Even though the study by (Walumbwa et al., 2008) provided primary evidence for the practical effects of authentic leadership in varied cultures, additional research in this area is needed (Peus, Wesche, Streicher, Braun, & Frey, 2012).

This study aimed to look into the impact of authentic leadership on the organizational citizenship behavior of Ethiopian public servants. As a result, considering diverse demographic research participants, the longitudinal method in different countries and sectors are research gaps in prior research that require further investigation. More research will additionally be needed to investigate authentic leadership across different cultures and contexts. For example, AL across various cultures (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009), cultural values of the individual group using experimental field (Sendjaya, 2019), moderator related to culture that could impact the efficiency of positive leadership (Babalola, Stouten, Camps, & Euwema, 2019), AL in different cultures (Peus et al., 2012). Thus, leadership in the Africa context is followed by humanistic behavior and principles (Poltera & Schreiner, 2019). Moreover, Africa's cultural and moral dimensions have a vital role in leadership styles (Of, 2011). Hence, there are very limited studies on this area (Abebe, Tekleab, & Lado, 2020; Avey, Palanski, & Walumbwa, 2011). Therefore, the purpose of the study aims to address the following research questions.

- i. *What are the characteristics of authentic leadership (personalized moral perspective, information sharing, self-awareness, relational transparency)?*
- ii. *How does organizational citizenship behavior enhance Ethiopia's public service?*
- iii. *How does authentic leadership influence employees' organizational citizenship behavior in Ethiopia's public service?*
- iv. *What are the cultural and political influences of authentic leadership in Ethiopia's public service?*

Literature Review

Numerous research outputs in different contexts and continents found the positive effects of authentic leadership on public service employees' OCB. For instance, research conducted in Spanish leadership and its outcome on employees' OCB based on four components of authentic leadership, individual and organizational dimension found that AL is a good forecaster of OCB after behaviors are focused on institutions (Edú Valsania et al., 2012). In the same country in different public sectors, authentic leadership influences OCB and work engagement in the Spanish military context (Pastor Álvarez et al., 2019). Moreover, the motivational influences of transformational leadership in Mexico were more minor for public service subordinates higher in public service motivation than those lower in public service motivation (Bottomley, Mostafa, Gould-Williams, & León-Cázares, 2016). Besides, ethical leaders have a positive influence on their subordinates as well. For example, empirical findings in the U.S Air force academy indicate that leaders used professional, referent, and reward power which was associated with the highest OCBs among their followers when the followers perceived their leaders as ethical (Reiley & Jacobs, 2016). Also, American workers' belief in a leader is related to their perceptions of their emotional authenticity (Caza et al., 2015).

In Asia, culture and traditional context enhance authentic leadership on OCB. For example, Chinese tradition enhances authentic leadership on OCB (Li, Yu, Yang, Qi, & Fu, 2014). Furthermore, due to cultural and socio-political context, there is a lack of mediating effects of job satisfaction in China, whereas reliance and job satisfaction mediates OCB in Indonesia (Sendjaya, 2019). Leaders and subordinates have perceived authentic leadership differently as well. For instance, AL and teachers' OCB in secondary schools of Pakistan confirmed different perceptions of AL by heads and teachers (Quraishi & Aziz, 2018). In Taiwan, ethical leadership was negatively correlated to employees' workplace protectiveness (Y. De Wang & Sung, 2016). Besides, authentic leadership, work appointment, and OCB in Petroleum in the Arab context found that AL affects OCB and work engagement through psychological empowerment (Authors, 2015). In Africa, the existing data is limited and no previous study has focused on the impact of AL on OCB in public service employees' except the effect of Authentic leadership, OCB, and intent to quit in the South Africa service industry context which found that authentic leadership enhances employees belonging to the organization and decreases the chances to resign (Olckers et al., 2019). Furthermore, AL, as an existing Leadership exemplary in Nigeria, confirms a positive relationship between AL behaviors and outcome variables of organizational commitment and supposed leader helpfulness among employees (Emuwa & Fields, 2017). Hence, Africa must address this gap and adopt a leadership style that can positively influence public employees' effectiveness. Therefore, public service in Africa is structured in its context as illustrated by the limited studies on the Ethiopian public sector which predominantly focused on public service reform (Kuada, 2010; Nkomo, Zoogah, & Acquah, 2015).

Leadership in the public sector is essential as it is expected to solve the bottlenecks of public affairs. Besides, the demand for leadership in public institutions has to be positive advocacy to encourage some basic principles that could be seen as public-spiritedness (Leadership, 2001). Authentic leadership is explicated as leaders who are aware of themselves, having logical openness with their followers, and create an ethical organizational climate that relies on common understanding (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Ford & Harding, 2011; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Hence, authentic leadership theory has emerged in the last decade (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May 2004b). Empirical evidence indicates a relationship of authenticity with the extra-role behavior of employees. For instance, there is a relationship between authentic leadership citizenship behavior that promotes mutual benefits (Lepine, Erez, & Johnson, 2002). Leadership is challenging in all situations, both in government and non-government organizations. Leadership challenges in public and private sectors lack specific leadership competence, knowledge, and change that could be suitable for clients (Ferguson, Ronayne, & Rybacki, 2014). This is similar to Ethiopia's leadership. Transformational leadership style plays a positive role for academicians in Ethiopia's higher education institutions (Kebede & Demeke, 2017). Besides, Ethiopian healthcare professionals' research revealed that transformational leadership influenced employees' OCB (Abdullahi, Z. J., Ma, Z., Tehzeeb, M., Ethel, A., & Elvis, 2017). Satisfied workers are more likely to contribute and be committed to their organizations. Thus, managers should engage and satisfies their employees and in return to contribute to their organizations even beyond their job description. Hence, in public service, the role of leadership is to create an environment that is friendlier for employees and make them engage in a different role. Besides, Ethiopia had introduced the Civil Service Reform Program (CSRP) in 1996, and the government gives due attention to the humanistic approach among public servants in public service and should be replicated as core elements of leadership (Kebede & Demeke, 2017). Another research conducted in Ethiopia secondary school on perceived leadership effectiveness and relationship within academic results among students revealed that leadership might ultimately impact students' academic achievement (Dessalegn, Bekalu, & Frew, 2016; Geleta & Amsale, 2016). Empirical evidence shows a shortage of research on leadership and OCB in Ethiopia and sub-Saharan African (Abdullahi, Z. J., Ma, Z., Tehzeeb, M., Ethel, A., & Elvis, 2017; Githaiga, 2021).

This study followed from the perspectives of social exchange and social learning theories. In addition, social exchange theory has become the most known theoretical model in understanding employees' OCB. Hence, social exchange theory focuses on a mutual exchange which is the utmost straightforward form of human influences (Iqbal et al., 2018). The fundamental of social exchange theory is the collaboration that causes consensus from another person is more likely to be repeated than a collaboration that causes unhappiness (M. Kim, 2016). Moreover, from the perspectives of social exchange theory, while workers feel obliged to engage in OCB, these satisfied workers feel extra commitment to repay their organization than those who dislike their job (Bolino, Turnley, Gilstrap, & Suazo, 2010). According to the social exchange theory perspective, people intentionally or unintentionally evaluate each social condition regarding what they will have to give or take. This indicates the advantage they expect may get in response (S. H. Kim & Kim, 2016). Also, prior studies confirmed the positive effects of leadership styles on organizational climate (Ekvall & Ryhammar, 1998; Foster, 2006). In a good quality of the leader-follower relationship, social exchange develops an effect of leader-subordinate trust in each other, and subordinates feel valued by their supervisors (Tummers & Knies, 2013). Besides, authentic leadership could support employees to have a positive impact in the workplace. Consequently, workers who perceived leadership and organization as fair show positive behavior contribute to organization success (Iqbal et al., 2018).

From the perspectives of social exchange theory, we could understand that employees perceived as genuine and authentic leaders could show a positive role and commitment to the organization. Moreover, authentic leaders encourage their subordinates to contribute (Rego, Vitória, Magalhães, Ribeiro, & e Cunha, 2013) positively. Therefore, it may be anticipated that public service employees who are self-aware are authentic leaders and could engage more in organizational citizenship behavior. OCB may be considered by management that employees could practice increasing their image (Bolino, Kacmar, Turnley, & Gilstrap, 2008), impression management more relates to personal citizenship (Bowler & Brass, 2006; Snell & Wong, 2007). In social learning theory, individuals learn suitable and appropriate behaviors from their role model in the workplace (Schwarz, Eva, & Newman, 2020), as the leader is perceived as a reliable role model due to their office power and shows positive behaviors, which employees perceive as important. Based on social learning theory, ethical leaders are perceived as social learning models by encouraging good and discouraging wrong behavior (Treviño, Brown, & Hartman, 2003). Employees engaging in OCB if they think to be perceived as good citizens could help them create personal aims (Klotz & Bolino, 2013). Besides, OCB may see acts of impression management, which people use for image creation purposes (Bolino et al., 2008). In addition, impression management is related to OCB as well.

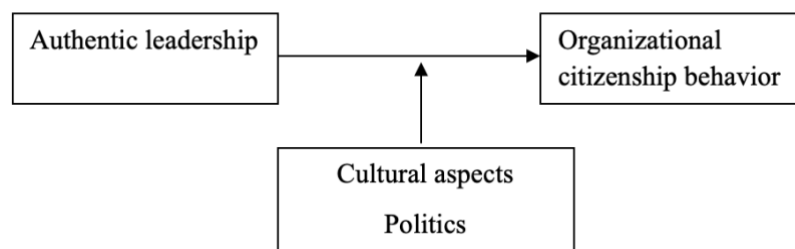


Figure 1: A framework of the study

Research and Method

This study used a qualitative method. Qualitative research considered certain characteristics such as sources, settings, and the reflective role of respondents. Using qualitative method has the advantage of simplicity and ease approach available for this purpose. When conducting a qualitative study, the researchers should consider the reasons for site selection, and how the findings will be reported (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006) as well. Moreover, this method has been widely used in the literature. Using purposive sampling federal public service organizations in Ethiopia were selected to address the research questions. Moreover, it helps to reflect how the public leaders play their role in creating OCB, and the intent to use multiple data sources instead of relying on a single source. The basis of selection was because they have incorporated citizen charter in their policy (Hailu, 2019) which sets out the basic principles of public service, by which Officers are guided, both in their relations with each other and in their dealings with the public they serve.

The reasons for choosing public service as the study area is due to the following: first, these public service organizations are incorporated citizen charter in their policy and it is about extra commitment, serving to the public interest and the large society. Hence, public servants of these organizations must have to help behavior and prioritize the public interest at large. On the other hand, there is a lack of empirical study on the effect of citizen charter on the public service. Second, these organizations are the major federal public services in Ethiopia.

Because they provide primarily public services such as civil service capacity building, public transport, health, community service, tourism, and media. Third, prior studies focus on the public service reform and its implementation; less emphasis was given to OCB and authentic leadership in public service.

Moreover, the public service organizations were selected based on the services they provide to the citizens. The respondents were selected from all management levels (top, middle and lower) equally from 10 public service organizations. Open-ended questions were used to explore the role of authentic leadership on public employees' organizational citizenship behavior. This information was collected from the leaders of the public service organizations. The questions were prepared based on authentic leadership and organizational citizenship behavior measurement variables.

Data was collected from different sources such as open-ended questionnaires, policy documents, and observation in the public service organizations. The open-ended questionnaires were distributed to 30 leaders. Out of these, 21 leaders completed the questionnaires comprising 10 participants from top-level management, 6 participants from middle level, and 5 participants from lower-level management. The selection of individual leaders was purposively made based on accessibility, willingness to fill the questionnaires, and their leadership experience in the organization (above two years). Hence, this research was intended to address to what extent and how authentic leadership influences public employees' organizational citizenship behavior.

Table 1: Details of participants and their leadership roles

Public service organization (code)	Number of respondents	Level of management		
		TLM	MLM	FLM
1	2	1	1	-
2	3	1	1	1
3	3	1	1	1
4	3	1	1	1
5	2	1	1	-
6	1	1	-	-
7	1	1	-	-
8	2	1	-	1
9	1	1	-	-
10	3	1	1	1
Total	21	10	6	5

TLM=Top level management, MLM=Middle level management, FLM=First line management

The open-ended questionnaires included two main themes: 1) authentic leadership, 2) organizational citizenship behavior. Authentic leadership had four sub-components: (a) internalized moral perspective, (b) balanced information processing, (c) relational transparency, (d) self-awareness. Organizational citizenship behavior also had four components: (a) attractiveness, (b) sportsmanship, (c) civic virtue, and (d) courtesy. Moreover, two days of observations were conducted in each public service organization to understand how public service leaders interact with employees and public servants' organizational citizenship behavior. Besides, publicly available documents, strategies of the organizations' citizenship charter and related to leadership in public service were used.

This study employed a descriptive research method in the form of a survey. The purpose of a descriptive survey is to conclude about a large population by taking representative samples, gathering the respondent's answers using descriptive methods (H. Kim, Sefcik, & Bradway, 2017; Nassaji, 2015). Besides, it saves time for analysis; compared to other types of data collection such as experiments and observation; it is also cheaper and faster. Besides, the qualitative data was used using open-ended questions. The leaders were difficult to meet in their office due to repetitive meetings and other office commitments. However, the researcher has reminded them consecutively to fill the questionnaires. The data collection process took eight working weeks to wind up.

Though prior research on AL and OCB employed self-report, there is a call to use qualitative data such as interviews and open-ended questionnaires (de Geus et al., 2020a). It is argued that self-report leads to bias in research (Wright & Grant, 2010). Furthermore, the open-ended help gets indirect data from the managers (Crosswell, 2013. P.241). Besides, the open-ended questionnaire is a preferred qualitative method of data collection for various reasons. For instance, it minimizes misunderstandings, greater depth of data, and is easy for controlling samples (Kothari, 2004). Besides, it helps collect data about the leaders' authentic leadership behavior, and OCB in the public service. The open-ended questionnaire was prepared using the main themes of the study variables and incorporating all dimensions of measurements in the questionnaires.

Results

This section presented results on the effects of authentic leadership in public services, the impact of authentic leadership on employees' organizational citizenship behavior, cultural aspects of leadership in public service, and authentic leadership practices in public services. To explore the influence of authentic leadership on employees' organizational citizenship behavior in federal public service organizations, themes were identified in the unstructured research questions. Participants of the unstructured questionnaires were twenty-one leaders from ten public services. There were four females and seventeen males. Besides, there was only one female Ph.D. holder; fourteen were masters and six university degree graduates. The questionnaire formulated to get information broadly required public service leaders. Qualitative data were analyzed systematically, making the data labeled, coded, selecting important codes to create themes, connecting relevant themes, and writing. Hence, respondents' answers were recorded as verbatim responses and then interpreted in different themes to generate meaningful information related to the study problem.

Leadership practices in Ethiopia public services

Ethiopia's public service organizations introduced and practiced different leadership styles in the sector. For example, transformational leadership, transactional leadership were broadly introduced management tools. However, these leadership styles do not make the public servant serve more and engage citizenship behavior. Its focus was on influencing and penalty-reward instruments to achieve organizational goals. The majority (70%) of the respondents agreed on collaborative, relational, and communicative leadership, broadly based on the humanistic leadership style. The public service organizations used a leadership style characterized by relational transparency, internalized cultural perspective, collaboration, and self-awareness. According to TLM (10), nowadays, the leadership practices are closer to subordinates and informational transparency is mostly applied in the public service. *"very weak in analyzing information but very interested in listening and encouraging different views. Moreover, we request feedback from employees, gather through other means, and try to improve next time"*. Besides, the employees of the public service organizations were interested in engaging in helping behavior as well. Most of the time, expectations of leadership, management, and eagerness to see change were common in the public service. On the other hand, 30% of the respondents said the leadership practices in the public service depend on the political dynamism of the country. *"... it is difficult to say, the organizations' leaders used a democratic leadership style as they did not incorporate employees' suggestions in decision-making"* FLM(8).

What are the characteristics of authentic leadership in public services?

The study was intended to assess the availability of public service leaders' internalized morals and self-awareness and to what extent they reflect in their organization. Participants show internalized moral perspective in public service leaders reflects based on their human values, principles, and judgments. The researcher asked leaders of the organization about their self-awareness and internalized moral perspectives to their employees. The majority of the respondents (80%) perceived that they follow their moral perspectives, and self-aware, and principled. For example, the leader of MLM (9) said leaders in the public service try their best to 'walk the talk', *I attempt to be consistent in a way to walk the talk sometimes to the extent of compromising my interest, leaders of the public service trying to demonstrate and reflect their beliefs."*

The majority of the participants emphasize that as the public servants have clear rights and know the bureaucracy very well, there is no reason to show pseudo leadership. Hence, transparency, use of your moral principles, and perspectives play a great role. Thus, leaders of public service know very well about the situation and behavior of civil servants. Therefore, this could be the reason for showing and internalizing the moral core value that could help to work with and encourage employees' organizational citizenship behavior. TLM (2) said the leaders have integrity, consistency, and follow principles.

"The public service leaders have tried to do what they promise, treat employees, and keep their integrity. Besides, most of the time my action reflects my beliefs. For example, "I try to understand the personal problems of employee and balance work-life balance". Moreover, TLM (1)" I believe my beliefs and actions are consistent. However, there are several beliefs I have and do not reflect

on my work. What I'm doing is try to contextualize with the employees' behavior, and reach consensus." Besides, they demonstrate beliefs related to work freely and clearly till subordinates took on the culture in the organization.

To what extent do you incorporate others' ideas before making the decision?

The study investigated to what extent leaders in the public service consider the views of employees to make the decision. Hence, the researchers asked respondents to what extent and do you incorporate views of employees'/others before making the decision. More than 75% of respondents agreed that there is a platform where employees reflect their views and possible solution recommendation for any issues before it is decided. For instance:

"Action makes a person good or bad. In addition, not all beliefs are right. Hence, gathering relevant information before making the decision is the crucial point in our organization". MLM (9). This indicates the leaders are aware of the impact of unqualified information for making decisions for the employees and organizations in general. There is weakness in analyzing information but interested to listen and encourage different views. Information is refined to be ready for a decision anytime as public institutions and management strongly demand updated and tangible facts.

According to MLM (5) ... *"We have fixed time to discuss our work and raise different things. Finally, we listen and decided based on common understanding and what we had an agreement. As much as possible before any decision reflecting different opinions save one's leaders from a mistake".* Except some condition which needs an immediate decision, gathering relevant information used as an input for decisions was elaborated by TLM(1) *"I always tried to analyze information exhaustively except in some conditions that require an immediate decision. Because my decision can affect others".*

The majority of the respondents said that before making a decision, leaders analyze evidence crucial to making the decision; therefore, all information is well organized, analyzed, and interpreted. This is supported by TLM (3)...." Before making the decision, I should have got information from peers to be reasonable and consistent". However, sometimes and in times of urgency, leaders used available information to make the decision.

Do you have relational transparency with employees and practice in the public service?

Related to relational transparency, the participants were asked if they have relational transparency and to what extent practices in public service. Almost 70% of respondents perceived that there is a platform of relational transparent views in the public service with employees and clients. Besides, according to the citizen charter developed by the organizations, they should have transparency and good relationship in a formal, planned meeting with their clients and other stakeholders to discuss the service delivery and overall leadership processes. If there is a transparent relationship with employees they could provide feedback and raise their idea; as a result, they can contribute in extra-role. Moreover, leaders of public services believe in relationship management, transparency, and a suitable approach to deal with the public servant in a public organization. 20% of respondents disagreed on the availability of open and transparent relational efforts of leaders in the workplace. 10% of respondents said sometimes relational transparency could have negative consequences. Example: *MLM (9) "to the extent time allowed us there are no restrictions employees to transparency what they believe to the extent of entertain points of disagreement and agreement to disagreement. "The leaders of the public service organization encourage participating freely, but employees are not able to speak freely as the organizational culture is bad." TLM (7). "Leaders encourage employees to some extent.* The observation result shows there are suggestions boxes in each study organization.

Moreover, it could be one indicator of receiving ideas from subordinates. *However, employees did not speak as they have a fear of its consequences.* Another respondent also supported this opinion: *"We speak freely with my subordinates and sometimes had challenged me and finally come to one idea. However, with our boss, we cannot talk to her freely. She always talks to us in a dictatorship style. So, I can't say I have transparent relations."* MLM (3).

Moreover, the reason for not having a transparent relationship is the behavior of leadership style as they said, *"The reason for not having good relationships and sharing ideas transparently freely as culture and a bad habit of agency or the state influenced them. Most of the time not due to the leaders' problem."* MLM (1).

How does authentic leadership influences employees' organizational citizenship behavior in public services?

The participants were asked about their willingness to help others and the influence of authentic leadership on public servants' organizational citizenship behavior. The results showed that 80% of respondents were perceived authentic leadership influences the employees' organizational citizenship behavior, whereas 15% of respondents perceived it affects but it's through indirectly, and 5% of the respondents said it is less influence on employee's organizational citizenship behavior. For example:

"We are interested in helping our subordinates. We work to change the way we live, to create a better environment for humanity. Therefore, when our colleague is in a problem, it is must help her/him, to make the job better; help the person get out of the problem. As a result, the employees will respond in return by engaging in organizational citizenship behavior". MLM (9).

Moreover, to illustrate more how the authenticity behavior of leadership could enhance employees' citizenship behavior and contribute more to the organization's success. Example:

"Besides, the leaders in public services interested to support their subordinate and employees through giving training coaching, identifying strengths and weakness, understanding personal problem, and to the extent of doing the job together. Because helping employees create an organizational ethical climate that results from a team spirit is an input to achieve organizational citizenship behavior." MLM (4). The majority of the leaders confirmed that they give more support in giving direction, giving feedback, and give an avenue to air their concerns.

Respondents were also asked how much time they spend helping others in the public service. The majority of the 90% said they spent more time helping behavior, 5% of the respondents help others but do not specifically remember the exact time, and 5% do not help others. Example:

The leader's contribution is involved in a difficult situation that is beyond the capability to solve it. Besides, according to TLM (2) *"I spent 20% of my time helping employees"*. According to TLM (1) *"I spent at least three hours in a day"*. *We help others, but we do not know or have exact data.* On the other hand, due to the nature of the organization, some leaders do not engage that much time in helping subordinates. Some leaders confirmed that they are not engaged to help others, particularly employees *"Who could easily do it."* LLM (1).

The respondents were asked if they are interested in helping others even during challenging situations and why. The majority of respondents 70% to a high extent and any type of support when needed as responsibility and it gives them pleasure. 20% said it is more to job-related tasks considered a duty, and 10% said it depends. The public services leaders provide support on the job training, coaching, mentoring, and advice-friendly relationship. Not only as a leader as a human being besides of as someone who is in difficulties is common in public services. Because it gives them a sense of solidarity and happiness. Moreover, the organization was more influenced by social and it is a kind of organizational culture as well.

According to TLM (1) *"Helping during challenging work with such employees in such situations gave me happiness"*. This idea was supported by MLM (4) *"New employees are coming to the new working environment, therefore, they need to be oriented appropriately till they feel very comfortable to working area."* The majority of the public service leaders said it is must provide support and awareness about the organization's policies, and programs. *The organization's leaders believe that if there is a close relationship and cooperation with employees, they could contribute and engage in extra commitment. This helps to achieve the organizational goals instead of a materialistic approach. Moreover, employees are responsive and interested for to engage in citizenship behavior if their leaders are cooperative, follow the humanistic way of handling employees, not politically-oriented issues, and those give value to culture as well"*.

The cultural and political influence of authentic leadership in public services

Finally, the respondents were asked to explain the cultural and political influence of authentic leadership in Ethiopia's public services. The qualitative result revealed that 65% of the respondents perceived that culture and politics influence public service leadership, 35% of cultural aspects highly influence leadership. Example:

LLM (1) *"Social problems and behavior of subordinates influence my leadership style. I have a fear not to offend our subordinates while ordering them to do tasks. Because, if employees are disappointed it is difficult to engage in extra-role. On the other hand, public services are a demand to serve the public not only in the given office hours but also going extra time. Hence, considering the cultural aspects of society is very important to be effective and win the hearts and minds of employees."* Influence impacts the leadership style or decision-making while the leader exercises their leadership positively or negatively.

Hence, the major factors that influences leaders were cultural aspects. Because Ethiopia is one of the traditional societies with its huge traditional aspects of leadership practices, shared common values, history, and way of life. The political situation of the country influences leadership in public service. Moreover, the country is dependent on the ruling party of the government. Hence, if you don't accept the decisions of the ruling party's you will label as destructive. Example:

TLM(2) *"Political interferences from different actors, the diverse interest of employees, the overall situation in the country, unpredictable issues like COVID-19, backward laws and regulations". Lack of knowledge, skill, choices in selecting methods, personal behavior of employees influences leadership behavior in the public service."* *On the other hand, some leaders of the public service said predominantly influenced in their leadership style by relationship management."* *Usually my focus is respecting the human element along with the performance of tasks. Thus, I'm influenced by relationship management"*. MLM(2).

Discussion

The study results confirmed that AL in public services was characterized by internalized moral perspective, consistency and demonstrate an environment that could create a positive organizational climate. This climate encourages public employees to engage in extra-role behavior. This result, consistent with a prior study on authentic leadership is anticipated to exhibit characteristics that will provide the effectiveness of positive organizational settings and good harmony with employees (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Ford & Harding, 2011). Much of the research presented in this work can apply to any public service organization, particularly those

countries that followed humanistic leadership behavior. However, the findings cannot be generalized to private organizations due to the scope focused on public service. Because authentic leadership in public and private organizations has different meanings [36,62], this study's intention was authentic leadership in public services. The leaders of public service also practiced sharing information and incorporating employees' views before making the decision. The majority of respondents perceived that the availability of information sharing and considering other ideas as well. Moreover, the observation result indicates there are suggestions boxes in each public service and complaint handling committee for any issues coming from the employees. This creates transparency and trust in leaders.

However, in times of urgency, the public service leaders use the available information to decide. Of course, unplanned decisions are common due to many agendas coming from the external stakeholders and government. The results obtained here may have implications for understanding authentic leadership in times of crisis could have negative aspects. This result is consistent with a prior study that perception of the crisis was positively linked to recognized charisma but not a perception of AL in the US 2008 election (Williams, Pillai, Deptula, & Lowe, 2012).

Relational transparency is another behavioral dimension expected from authentic leadership. The majority of the respondents agreed that there is relational transparency through formal discussion, meetings, and management encourages reflecting employees' views freely. Our result was consistent with prior studies that confirmed the positive influence of authentic leadership on employees' extra-role (Bamford, Wong, & Laschinger, 2013; D. Wang et al., 2021; Zhou, Yang, Kwan, & Chiu, 2019). Moreover, a study conducted in the South Africa public sector revealed that authentic leadership is a forecaster of optimism and trust (Stander, De Beer, & Stander, 2015). On the other hand, some of the respondents disagreed on the availability of transparency and leadership relations with employees. That is why employees did not openly air their views to their leaders. Besides, employees did not express their true feelings due to fear of consequences, and their views may be perceived as aggressive political agenda against the government. Hence, if there is low trust perception of authenticity decrease too. This result is consistent with prior studies on lack of trust exposes to decrease employees perception of authenticity (Noe, Tews, & Dachner, 2010; Williams et al., 2012).

Concerning the influence of authentic leadership on the organizational citizenship behavior of public service, employees discussed it as followed. Authentic leadership could express through relational transparency, adopted moral perspective, information sharing, and self-awareness. The respondents and document review confirmed that authentic leadership influences employees' citizenship behavior by creating a conducive environment; make relational transparency and information sharing. In response to the behavior of authentic leadership, employees were also willing to help others, provide support in times of challenging situation, and spent their time helping others.

The cultural and political influence of authentic leadership on public service was discussed from the results of respondents, document review, and observation. Thus, the results show the majority of respondents perceived that culture and politics influence leadership in the public service. Therefore, employees working in conducive organizational culture have an impact on creating a good work environment. In addition, they could be engaged in organizational behavior. This result is consistent with previous study positive organizational culture enhances authentic leadership behavior (Shirey, 2009). Besides, the majority of respondents agreed on the influences of cultural and social factors in their leadership behavior. Since Ethiopia is a traditional society with its own endogenous culture, leadership styles, and history, respecting each other and understanding are very crucial elements. This shows the relevance of our finding and innovative approach to leadership styles with a study on the traditional endogenous leadership styles. Ethiopia has practiced them since the 5th century (Lituchy, Galperin, Punnett, Mengistu, & Lituchy, 2017), authentic leadership influenced by various cultures (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Moreover, this study confirmed the relevance of incorporating culture into leadership style as it is a key determinant of leadership in Africa (Andrew, 1992; Of, 2011). Research conducted in Nigeria on authentic leadership as the current leadership model revealed that limitations in its data collection focus only on the same respondent profile (Emuwa & Fields, 2017). However, this study collected data from different backgrounds, educational levels, and levels of management who have detailed information as well. This result is consistent with prior studies that found that Chinese culture and traditional context enhance authentic leadership on OCB (Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van Dierendonck, & Liden, 2019; Li et al., 2014).

The majority of the respondents agreed that political interferences negatively affect authentic leadership in public services. Moreover, it decreases acceptance, trust, and interaction with employees as well. The political influence could create through interest-based and focused on serving certain groups in the organizations at the expense of other members. Political influence negatively affects authentic leadership in public services as the external influences of leaders challenge sharing of information, internalized moral perspective, and relational transparency with employees. This result is similar to a previous study that confirmed that perception of politics was an antecedent of organizational citizenship behavior in public services (Chang, Rosen, & Levy, 2009; de Geus, Ingrams, Tummars, & Pandey, 2020b). Moreover, recent literature has started to examine the limit of authenticity. Hence, politics consistently decreases the constructive impacts of authentic leadership on employees' organizational citizenship behavior (Munyon, Houghton, Simarasl, Dawley, & Howe, 2021), decreases the potential of authentic leaders (Lee, Bradburn, Johnson, Lin, & Chang, 2019), limits employees' helping behavior (Munyon et al., 2021).

The innovative finding of this study contributes to the authentic leadership literature and its positive influence on public employees' OCB. Furthermore, politics negatively affects authentic leadership's positive role in employees' OCB (Munyon et al., 2021). Besides, public service organizations are expected to engage in OCB as the sector has different characteristics (Cohen & Vigoda, 2000). Transactional and transformational leadership styles do not result in higher OCB as they focus on imposing and influencing

subordinates to achieve organizational goals. Therefore, leaders of public services should be aware of that and try to cope up themselves to introduce the authentic type of leadership. It helps them be more self-aware, transparent, individualized moral perspectives. Moreover, this leadership behavior could lead to high public employees OCB. This study could contribute to the small body of literature on OCB in the public sector in African countries. Based on this perspective, this study extends (de Geus et al., 2020b) leadership and OCB required to focus on public contexts. Prior studies limitations on authentic leadership and OCB concerning data collection method were focused on self-reported (Olckers et al., 2019). However, this study reporting qualitative data from the managers more relevant in public service characteristics of organizational citizenship behavior (de Geus et al., 2020b). To increase public organizations' service delivery, the public service organizations should emphasize and assess the impacts of leadership styles on employees' organizational citizenship behavior. Hence, the researchers recommended considering the cultural aspects, which predominantly focused on mutual understanding, relational transparency, friendly approaches, and moral values.

Moreover, the finding of their study had vital useful implications for practitioners. Managers should clearly understand what leadership styles motivate employees to engage in extra-role behaviors and are required to appropriately design and implement strategy accordingly. The use of authentic leadership behavior is very important to promote OCB and contribute to the overall organizational achievement of the public services. Politics influences AL behavior and has consequences on employees' helping behavior in the public service.

This research has limitations: first, these findings are limited as the study primarily focuses on public services with different public service organizations, with main service providers, various services, have high contact with clients at the federal level in Ethiopia. However, had it been incorporated in different regions it could give more rich data and comprehensive understandings as well. Therefore, the generalizability of the findings of this study to the public service should be considered. Second, in this study, an open-ended questionnaire was used as it gives freedom to the respondents to express their feelings without bias. Nevertheless, different approaches could be used as well. Third, this study only reports evidence from federal public service organizations' managers/leaders' perspectives. Therefore, future research could expand this study by incorporating information from different stakeholders, employees, clients, and from policies, and strategy documents as well.

Considering the importance of authentic leadership and OCB in the public sector, future research could study the following research areas that contribute to the body of knowledge about this area. Investigating the impacts of authentic leadership across various cultures (Avolio et al., 2009) and particularly required in other African countries. Furthermore, whether political or cultural influence moderates the association between authentic leadership and OCB in public service.

Nowadays, the world requires flexible job actions, and public service organizations are seeking to introduce "family-friendly" policies. Hence, future studies could investigate whether public service employees engaged in OCB under flexible work situations, linking OCB and effectiveness, working from homes and OCB. Besides, cultural and political aspects related to OCB and its consequences, mainly to what extent managers of public service were influenced by cultural aspects and its consequences in other developing countries particularly African countries required further study. Moreover, though OCB is valuable, play an important role in the public services, and contributes to organizational performance, this research recommends in future researches to see from the other side of the story such as consequences of OCB, quality of the employees engaged in OCB, and sources in the public service as well because there is some prior empirical evidence on the differences in the conceptualization of OCB in various cultures and political contexts (Farh, Zhong, & Organ, 2004; L. Wang, Hinrichs, Prieto, & Howell, 2013).

Conclusions

The outcome of various qualitative results concludes that authentic leadership influences public employees' OCB behavior. The results from this study and published data support this conclusion. Overall, the results show a high level of agreement in the majority of the respondents. To increase public service performance, employees were supposed to contribute more and go beyond the call of the job description. Therefore, this study argues that authentic leadership significantly contributes to public employees' organizational citizenship behavior.

Specifically, it assesses (i) What are the characteristics of authentic leadership (personalized moral perspective, information sharing, self-awareness, relational transparency); (ii) How organizational citizenship behavior enhance in the public sector, (iii) How authentic leadership influences employees' organizational citizenship behavior in the public services, (iv) what are cultural and political influences of authentic leadership in public services. The result is an innovative contribution to behavioral public administration by showing how authentic leadership in an African context (which follows humanistic leadership) has a high role in improving employees' organizational citizenship behavior. Moreover, culture influences authentic leadership positively (through humanistic and mutual respect and understanding) whereas political aspects negatively affect authentic leadership through the political interference of the leading party and other agencies on the leaders' behavior.

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